

as easily take those rights away. On December 10, 1998, with the signing of this Executive Order, President Clinton accepted on behalf of all Americans a definition of human rights that descends from government authority. Due to this action, every American has lost some of their basic freedoms.

Executive Orders are supposed to be a presidential tool for running the Federal Government. President Clinton, however, has used Executive Orders to bypass the legislative branch, and make policy affecting other branches of government, states, and individuals. For example, Executive Order 13107 requires the Federal government to establish the Interagency Working Group on Human Rights Treaties to provide guidance, oversight, and coordination concerning adherence to and implementation of U.S. human rights obligations and related matters. This not only expands the President's regulatory authority, but also bypasses Congress's legislative powers and the Senate's treaty power. If President Clinton believes this is an important objective of his Administration he should send legislation to Capitol Hill and allow Congress the ability to debate and vote on this proposal. It is clear this Executive Order contains alarming provisions that diminish basic rights provided for in our Constitution.

This is a clear example of the President abusing the power entrusted to him by the American people. As Paul Begala, an aid to Clinton, has stated "The President has a very strong sense of powers of the presidency, and is willing to use all of them." I believe Congress should recognize its power and vote on the United States Federal Government Preservation Act of 1999 in order to stop the implementation of Executive Order 13107. Executive Orders have long been recognized as a presidential prerogative. However, they are not a blank check to rewrite the Constitution or to assume powers that belong to the states, or other branches of government. This Congress needs to take immediate steps to ensure Executive Orders are used for their intended purpose, and not to take rights away from American citizens.

TRIBUTE TO GORDON GRAVES

HON. JERRY WELLER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 1999

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and recognize the life of Gordon Graves, who died on September 16, 1998 at the age of 80. Gordon Graves was a great man and true hero in his efforts to save the Kankakee River.

Gordon Graves was born along the banks of the Kankakee River and thus knew and understood the river. He had been known to describe himself as a "river rat" and was a life-long hunter, fisherman, and conservationist who spent most of his life protecting the Kankakee River. Gordon was one of the first voices of concern for the Kankakee River. According to Gordon, people took whatever they could get from the river, and the next day, they took it again. The problem is that they took more than the river had to give.

At the age of 45, Gordon Graves retired early to work full time to protect the Kankakee River. He is one of the founding fathers of the Northern Illinois Angler's Association, and of the Alliance to Restore the Kankakee River. Throughout his life, Gordon Graves served on many Illinois State Conservation Advisory Boards and Commissions. The highest honor Gordon Graves received was the Pride of America Award, presented to him by President Ronald Reagan.

Gordon Graves is survived by his wife, Marion Graves. As one newspaper article pointed out, Gordon Graves has passed on a legacy of spirit, of vision and of organization that will see his work continue.

Gordon Graves' commitment and impact on his community is not only deserving of congressional recognition, but should serve as a model for others to follow.

At a time when our nation's leaders are asking the people of this country to make serving their community a core value of citizenship, honoring Gordon Graves is very appropriate.

I urge this body to identify and recognize others in their congressional districts whose actions have so greatly benefited and enlightened America's communities.

HELPING PARENTS TEACH THEIR KIDS: THE CHILDREN'S EDUCATION TAX CREDIT

HON. JAMES E. ROGAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 1999

Mr. ROGAN. Mr. Speaker, as the father of two beautiful twin daughters, Dana and Claire, I am firmly committed to providing our nation's children an education which will prepare them for the future. Congress must empower parents to do more for their children so that our nation's next generation can truly thrive.

That's why I am introducing the Children's Education Tax Credit Act today. This bill provides a \$1,000 tax credit per child for education expenses. The tax credit will be given to families who devote their hard-earned money to purchase textbooks, supplies, educational computer software, tuition, and other resources their children need to excel in school.

Today, an average American family spends about \$720 per year on each child's learning. Sadly, too many Americans are forced to choose between spending a little extra on their kid's learning or paying the rent. With the Children's Education Tax Credit, parents can better afford to make the best education choices for their children. It is vital that we reward investment in a child's education and encourage families to control more of their own money.

By letting parents decide how best their education dollars can be spent, we begin deferring to local communities and families the crucial decisions on how to educate a child. For the sake of our children, I urge that Members join me in fighting for sound education for our nation's children by supporting the Children's Education Tax Credit Act.

RESOLUTION OPPOSING THE UNILATERAL DECLARATION OF A PALESTINIAN STATE

HON. MATT SALMON

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 1999

Mr. SALMON. Mr. Speaker, the Resolution I have introduced today expresses bipartisan, bicameral congressional opposition to the unilateral declaration of a Palestinian state and urges the President to do the same and promise that such a declaration would not be recognized by the United States. Before I discuss the merits of the bill, I would like to thank Majority Whip DELAY, as well as Representatives SAXTON and ENGEL for all of their work in crafting the resolution. I would also like to thank Senators BROWBACK and WYDEN for introducing the companion resolution in the other chamber.

The United States owes Chairman Arafat no favors. At least eleven American citizens have been killed in Israel by Palestinian terrorists since the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993. Of the 15 Palestinians identified by Israel as participants in these attacks, most are free men, and four are reportedly serving in the PA police force. The Palestinian Authority harbors more terrorists who have murdered Americans than Libya.

The introduction of the resolution could not be more timely. Today, President Clinton is expected to meet with Chairman Arafat at the congressional prayer breakfast. His conversation with Chairman Arafat should make at least one point clear: The United States will NEVER recognize a unilaterally declared Palestinian state—whether the state is declared in this manner on May 4, 1999—the date the Oslo accords expire—January 1, 2000, or any date thereafter. It has been reported that Chairman Arafat may use the issue of statehood at the meeting to leverage the United States to place pressure on Israel to withdraw from additional land. President Clinton must not succumb to these tactics.

As our resolution states, at the heart of the Oslo process lies the basic, irrevocable commitment made by Palestinian Chairman Yasser Arafat that, in his words, "all outstanding issues relating to permanent status will be resolved through negotiations." Resolving the political status of the territory controlled by the Palestinian Authority while ensuring Israel's security is one of the central issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Therefore, a declaration of statehood outside the framework of negotiations would constitute a fundamental violation of the accords.

In mid-July, Chairman Arafat stated that "there is a transition period of five years and after five years we have the right to declare an independent Palestinian state." On September 24th, Chairman Arafat's cabinet threatened to unilaterally declare a Palestinian state that would encompass a portion of Jerusalem. The cabinet announced that "At the end of the interim period, [the Palestinian Authority] shall declare the establishment of a Palestinian state on all Palestinian land occupied since 1967, with Jerusalem as the eternal capital of the Palestinian state."

Jerusalem is the undivided, eternal capital of Israel, and U.S. law—the Jerusalem Embassy Act—recognizes that this should be U.S. policy. Palestinian threats to declare a state on land they do not have any territorial control over—particularly Jerusalem—at the very least amounts to a renunciation of the Oslo process, and could legitimately be interpreted by Israel as an act of war. The Administration has not effectively dampened the dangerous proclamations issued by the Palestinian Authority on statehood, and as May 4th rapidly approaches, if U.S. policy remains murky, hostilities could occur.

The most recent statements by Palestinian leaders have been confusing and somewhat contradictory. A number of reports indicate that plans for a unilateral declaration of statehood may be delayed—at least until after Israel holds elections on May 17th. However, some of the comments suggest that the Palestinians are still intent on declaring a state on May 4th. On January 24th, a senior Palestinian official told the Voice of Palestine that May 4th “is a day [which has] international legitimacy” and that “the Palestinian leadership can not postpone this date for even an hour in announcing an independent Palestinian state.” The day before, another senior official said that May 4th is “a historic and vital day,” suggesting that the Palestinians will indeed declare a state on this day.

The Clinton Administration has done little to discourage Palestinian aspirations of having a unilaterally declared state recognized by the United States. On several occasions over the past year, the Clinton administration has refused to express U.S. opposition to the unilateral declaration of an independent Palestinian state, and has left it as an open question as to whether the United States will recognize a unilaterally declared Palestinian state. As a case in point, during President Clinton’s visit to Gaza, in December, Chairman Arafat reaffirmed his intention of establishing a Palestinian state with its capital in Jerusalem. Unfortunately, the President might have only encouraged this course when he said: “[T]he Palestinian people and their elected representatives now have a chance to determine their own destiny on their own land.”

Recently, however, the President has issued more appropriate comments on the issue of statehood. In an interview for a London-based Saudi newspaper in mid-January, President Clinton said that: “[We] oppose the declaration of a state or any other unilateral action by any party outside the negotiation process in a manner that could pre-empt the negotiations.” He also said that, “We are making maximum efforts to strengthen negotiations on the final status (of the Palestinian territories) and believe that those who think they can adopt unilateral measures during the transitory period are opening up a path to catastrophe.”

President Clinton’s latest remarks on this issue are welcome but do not go far enough. A careful reading of his comments suggests that the United States may oppose a unilaterally declared Palestinian state, but has left open the possibility of recognition. It is critical for the President privately to inform Chairman Arafat and publicly tell the world that a unilateral declaration of statehood is a grievous violation of Oslo and will be firmly opposed, and never recognized by the United States.

I am encouraged that Congress is working in a bipartisan basis to head off this destabilizing threat to peace in the Middle East. It is essential that the United States speak loudly and clearly in advance of May 4th, to prevent a terrible miscalculation by Chairman Arafat.

PROTECTING ISRAEL

HON. TOM DeLAY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 1999

Mr. DeLAY. Mr. Speaker, I worked with Mr. SAXTON, Mr. SALMON and now over 60 co-sponsors to introduce a resolution calling on the President to clarify American policy with respect to a unilateral declaration of an independent Palestinian state. I did this because I feel the Administration’s policy regarding Israel and the Middle East process has been confusing and misleading not only for the American people, but for the international community at large, and especially for the parties to the peace process itself.

The United States has never endorsed the creation of a Palestinian state. After the signing of the Oslo accords, the U.S. made it clear that all questions of sovereignty and statehood were a matter for negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. However, First Lady Hillary Clinton’s public statement last May that “it will be in the long-term interests of the Middle East for Palestine to be a state . . . and seen on the same footing as any other state” put U.S. policy on this issue in severe and grave doubt.

The First Lady’s remarks came almost exactly one year before the scheduled expiration date in May, 1999 for completing the final status talks between Israel and the Palestinians under the Oslo agreement. Any unilateral declaration of statehood will constitute a fundamental violation of the Oslo accords because they were agreed to only after Chairman Arafat made an irrevocable commitment that, in his words, “all outstanding issues relating to permanent status will be resolved through negotiations.” Since resolving the political status of the Palestinian people while protecting the security of Israel is one of the central issues of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, any effort to act unilaterally on the issue will have the effect of destabilizing the current security situation not only in Israel but in the entire region.

So it is of great concern that despite official denials by the United States State Department and numerous other officials in the administration, the First Lady’s remarks were interpreted by many around the world, including Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat, as “a very important and clear signal” regarding the Administration’s position on the issue of Palestinian statehood. Arafat subsequently threatened to unilaterally declare an independent Palestinian state in May of 1999—which is now just three months away.

Last July, subsequent to the First Lady’s remarks, the United Nations voted to elevate the Palestinian observer mission at the UN to the status of a full observer mission, a status just short of that accorded an independent state.

Then last fall, while speaking before the United Nations, Yasser Arafat called on world leaders to support an independent Palestinian state—though the U.S. State Department scrambled mightily to prevent him from also repeating his threat to declare such a state unilaterally.

Mr. Speaker, what has been missing from this debate over the last year has been a public—and unequivocal—statement from President Clinton himself that the United States will never recognize the unilateral declaration of an independent Palestinian state. No amount of denials, statements, or clarifications by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and other functionaries down at the State Department can dispel the confusion and uncertainty about U.S. policy occasioned by the First Lady’s remarks. Rightly or wrongly, the perception of many around the world and even in this country is that only President Clinton has the clout to override the influence of the First Lady within his Administration on this point.

For the President to pretend otherwise is to hide his head, and America’s, in the sand. The need for the President to personally act to clarify the U.S. position was brought home when Yasser Arafat stated last July that “[t]here is a transition period of five years and after five years we have the right to declare an independent Palestine state. We are asking for an accurate implementation, an honest implementation of what has been signed in the White House under the supervision of President Clinton.”

Even after the conclusion of the Wye River agreement and the call for new elections in Israel, Chairman Arafat, his cabinet, the Palestinian legislature, and other officials continue to threaten to unilaterally proclaim the establishment of a Palestinian state when the Oslo accords expire on May 4, 1999. On January 24th, senior Palestinian official Saeb Erekat told the Voice of Palestine that May 4th “is a day [which has] international legitimacy” and that “the Palestinian leadership can not postpone this date for even an hour in announcing an independent Palestinian state.” The day before the Palestinian Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, Nabil Shaath, said that May 4th is “a historic and vital day” suggesting that the Palestinians will indeed declare a state on this day.

We must remember that Yasser Arafat and the Palestinians demand the whole West Bank and has declared “that there can be no permanent peace as long as the problem of Jerusalem remains unresolved.” The Palestinian Cabinet, on Thursday, September 24, stated that “at the end of the interim period, it (the Palestinian government) shall declare the establishment of a Palestinian state on all Palestinian land occupied since 1967, with Jerusalem as the eternal capital of the Palestinian state.”

It is way past time for the President to declare that the United States will never recognize a unilateral declaration of an independent Palestinian state, and that Israel, and Israel alone, can determine its security needs. This was made clear back in June, less than a month after the First Lady’s remarks, when Palestinian National Council Speaker Salim al-Za’nun announced that, “If following our declaration of state, Israel renews its occupation of